



Detecting a Water Leak

One of the major causes of high water consumption resulting in a high water bill is due to a plumbing leak, toilet leak, or irrigation system leak or malfunction. Your water meter may be your most useful tool in identifying water leaks on your property. If all sources of water are turned off in the house (washing machine, dishwasher, etc...) a leak can be determined by reading your water meter.

All of the water meters contain a leak indicator, such as the round red dial in the lower left of the meter that turns when water is being used.

Should this dial turn or the numbers advance when no water has been used, this indicates that a leak exists in your plumbing system. If the leak indicators show no indication of movement, to determine if a leak exists, read all the numbers on the water meter and make a note or drawing of the meter face and where all meter dials are located. Do not use any water on the premises for at least 6 to 8 hours. Next, reread the meter to see if the dials or numbers have moved. If movement has occurred, you have a leak.

To easily check if a toilet has a leak, perform a dye test. Place several drops of food coloring in the tank of the toilet but DO NOT FLUSH. Let stand for 30 minutes. Now check the toilet bowl. If the coloring has now appeared in the bowl, your toilet "flapper" valve needs replacement. If no color appears, you most likely do not have a leak.

Sprinkler systems can use a lot of water. To figure out how much water your sprinkler system uses each time it runs its regular cycle, go out to your meter and write down the reading before it runs, then the next morning check the meter and write down the numbers. Subtract the numbers and that will show you the amount of water your system is using on a regular basis. Do an inspection of the sprinkler heads to make sure they are not broken. Also after a power outage, check your programming to make sure it has not been reset.

Another possible cause of high usage can be your water softener. Check and make sure it is only running as scheduled.